



STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Idaho's ESEA Flexibility Application

Executive Summary

January 10, 2012

The State of Idaho is applying for flexibility under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as No Child Left Behind, to ensure every student graduates from high school prepared to go on to postsecondary education or the workforce without the need for remediation. To accomplish this, Idaho has created a new system of increased accountability that focuses on postsecondary and career-ready standards; recognition, accountability and support for all schools; and a support system for effective instruction and leadership at every level.

Idaho has taken a lead role in building the next generation of accountability systems. By passing the Students Come First reform laws in 2011, the state has moved toward an education system based on academic growth and better preparing students for the world that awaits them after high school. Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna worked with other states to develop key principles for new accountability systems through his role as President-Elect (and now current President) of the Council of Chief State School Officers. In June, Superintendent Luna sent a letter to Secretary Duncan, informing him that Idaho would begin moving toward a new system of increased accountability since Congress has not reauthorized No Child Left Behind. The new system would include more flexibility for school districts and a new accountability system that measures growth.

Under the current No Child Left Behind law, states can only measure school success based on proficiency – or how many students pass the test. The federal law, which originally passed in 2001, was supposed to be reauthorized four years ago so states could include academic growth, or how much progress a student makes in a given year. However, Congress has not taken action on reauthorization.

With a waiver to certain parts of the No Child Left Behind law, Idaho can create its new system of increased accountability based on higher standards, academic growth, and improved performance evaluations for educators – all key components of the Students Come First reform laws. These laws have positioned Idaho well to implement its new system of increased accountability.

In each state's waiver application, they must address four areas:

1. College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students
2. State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support
3. Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership
4. Reducing Duplication and Unnecessary Burden

Here is an overview of how Idaho's new system of increased accountability will work.

College- and Career-Ready Expectations for All Students

Idaho adopted the Common Core State Standards for mathematics and English language arts and is implementing a comprehensive plan for transitioning to the standards by the 2013-2014 school year. The plan includes professional development opportunities and additional tools and resources that are targeted for Idaho teachers, principals and district leadership teams. All trainings and resources will ensure that students receive the education they need to meet these standards, including students who are English language learners, students with disabilities and low-achieving students. The State also is moving to next-generation assessments that are aligned with the Common Core State Standards



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State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support

Idaho will maintain a single accountability system for all schools, Title I and non-Title I schools alike. Idaho will no longer measure Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for schools and districts. Under the new accountability system, the State has created a Five-Star scale to evaluate and recognize school performance.

The Five-Star scale uses multiple measures every year to determine a school's performance. Schools are evaluated based on student proficiency, student academic growth, student growth to proficiency, and postsecondary and career readiness metrics. The State will use the statewide standardized test, the ISAT, to measure growth and proficiency in grades 3-10. The State will use additional metrics, such as graduation rate, enrollment in and completion of advanced courses and student scores on college entrance exams to measure postsecondary and career readiness. Under Students Come First, the State already has moved toward measuring academic growth as well as proficiency.

Four-Star and Five-Star Schools will be publicly recognized and financially rewarded for their excellent performance. These schools will serve as an example to other schools. Under Students Come First, the State developed a statewide pay-for-performance plan to financially reward the certificated staff in schools that demonstrate overall excellence or significant academic growth each year. One-Star and Two-Star Schools will be required to develop school improvement plans tied to researched best practices and work closely with the State and their school districts to implement the interventions that are proven to raise student achievement and close achievement gaps. It will take these schools two consecutive years of progress to exit their status. Three-Star Schools also must complete an improvement plan but will be given considerable more flexibility in how they implement interventions to reach Four-Star or Five-Star Status. It will take these schools one year of progress to exit their status.

Supporting Effective Instruction and Leadership

Idaho has created statewide frameworks for performance evaluations that use multiple measures to improve the craft of teaching and instructional leadership at all levels. Every school district is currently using the Statewide Framework for Teacher Performance Evaluations, based on the Danielson Framework for teaching, to evaluate teachers at least once a year. Now, under Students Come First, at least 50 percent of a teacher and administrator's performance evaluation also must be based on student achievement. In addition, schools and districts must make sure parent input is included on teacher and school-based administrator performance evaluations going forward.

In addition, the Idaho State Department of Education (ISDE) is working with educational stakeholder groups to develop a statewide framework for administrator evaluations. This work is currently underway and should be completed by May 2012. The State will use these frameworks to make necessary changes with teacher and administrator preparation programs. This process has already begun with action from the Idaho State Board of Education.

Reducing Duplication and Unnecessary Burden

Idaho fully deployed a statewide longitudinal data system in the 2010-2011 school year. This system, known as the Idaho System for Educational Excellence (ISEE), has consolidated data collection processes at the State and district levels and should reduce duplicative reporting and other unnecessary burdens on schools and districts. In addition, the Idaho State Department of Education (ISDE) received a \$21 million grant from the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation to deploy the second phase of ISEE: a statewide instructional management system available to all classrooms, schools and districts.



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The State contracted with Schoolnet to provide the instructional management system. Through Schoolnet, a teacher or administrator can access Idaho's Content Standards, the Common Core State Standards, deconstructed Common Core State Standards, digital content aligned with the standards and lesson plans aligned to the content and standards. In the 2011-2012 school year, six school districts are piloting the additional use of assessment tools in Schoolnet. These assessment tools will be available to a majority of Idaho's schools and districts in the 2015-2016 school year through a competitive grant process. Eventually, all Schoolnet tools and resources will be available to every public school in Idaho in the 2016-2017 school year. The instructional management system will assist teachers and leaders in analyzing achievement data, building lesson plans and creating high-quality assessments.